

Dated: November 9, 1998.

Patricia A. Montanio,

Deputy Director, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. 98-30618 Filed 11-16-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 103098B]

Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; Atlantic Shark Fisheries; Exempted Fishing Permits (EFPs)

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Application for EFP; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces the receipt of an application for an EFP. If granted, this EFP would authorize, over a period of 1 year, collections of a limited number of sharks from the large coastal, pelagic, and small coastal groups from Federal waters in the Atlantic Ocean for the purpose of shark identification training.

DATES: Written comments on the applications must be received on or before December 2, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Send comments to Rebecca Lent, Chief, Highly Migratory Species Management Division (F/SF1), NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. The application and copies of the regulations under which exempted fishing permits are subject may also be requested from this address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Margo Schulze, 301-713-2347; fax: 301-713-1917.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This EFP is requested under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*) and regulations at 50 CFR 600 concerning scientific research activity, exempted fishing, and exempted educational activity.

Special Agent Paul Raymond intends to conduct a series of shark species identification courses for NMFS enforcement, United States Coast Guard, and Florida Marine Patrol personnel. In order to obtain specimens for this "hands-on" training, Special Agent Raymond has requested that Mr. Eric Sanders, a former commercial fisherman, be authorized to collect a maximum of 234 sharks (i.e., two

individuals per the 39 federally-managed species for three training sessions for a total of 234 fish) by bottom longline. Fishing will occur in the Atlantic Ocean off east central Florida. Issuance of an EFP is necessary because possession of five large coastal shark species is prohibited and because the commercial fishery for large coastal sharks is closed for extended periods.

The proposed collections involve activities otherwise prohibited by regulations implementing the Fishery Management Plan for Sharks of the Atlantic Ocean. The applicant requests authorization to fish for and to possess large coastal sharks outside the Federal commercial seasons and to fish for and to possess prohibited species.

NMFS finds that this application warrants further consideration because Atlantic sharks are extremely difficult to identify by species once the carcasses have been commercially dressed and the primary diagnostic characteristics (head, fins, and tail) have been removed. Therefore, thorough "hands-on" training of Federal and state personnel that will be enforcing Atlantic shark regulations is extremely critical to the effectiveness of the regulations. A final decision on issuance of EFPs will depend on the submission of all required information, NMFS' review of public comments received on the applications, conclusions of any environmental analyses conducted pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, and on any consultations with any appropriate Regional Fishery Management Councils, states, or Federal agencies.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: November 6, 1998.

Bruce C. Morehead,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. 98-30617 Filed 11-16-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 101498A]

Marine Mammals; File No. 881-1443

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Issuance of permit amendment.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Alaska SeaLife Center, Box 1329,

Seward, AK 99664 (907/224-2600) has been issued an amendment to scientific research Permit No. 881-1443.

ADDRESSES: The amendment and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the following office(s):

Permits and Documentation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (301/713-2289); and

Regional Administrator, Alaska Region, National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802-1668 (907/586-7221).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sara Shapiro or Ruth Johnson, 301/713-2289.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On August 6, 1998, notice was published in the **Federal Register** (63 FR 42010) that an amendment of Permit No. 881-1443, issued March 23, 1998 (63 FR 14905), had been requested by the above-named organization. The requested amendment has been granted under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) and the provisions of § 216.39 of the Regulations Governing the Taking and Importing of Marine Mammals (50 CFR part 216).

Permit No. 881-1443 authorizes the Alaska SeaLife Center to (1) import from Canada, three juvenile Steller sea lions (*Eumetopias jubatus*) and two juvenile harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina*); (2) obtain six additional harbor seals from U.S. facilities; and (3) conduct research activities on these animals over a five-year period. These studies may assess nutritional physiology, metabolic development, and clinical health under captive conditions.

This amendment now authorizes the Holder to: (1) collect whiskers or toenails from each harbor seal for background concentrations of stable isotopes of carbon and nitrogen; (2) feed the harbor seals fish, or inject them with solution containing stable isotopes of carbon and nitrogen; and (3) collect serial biopsies of blubber and muscle to assess lipid profiles.

Dated: November 5, 1998.

Ann D. Terbush,

Chief, Permits and Documentation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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